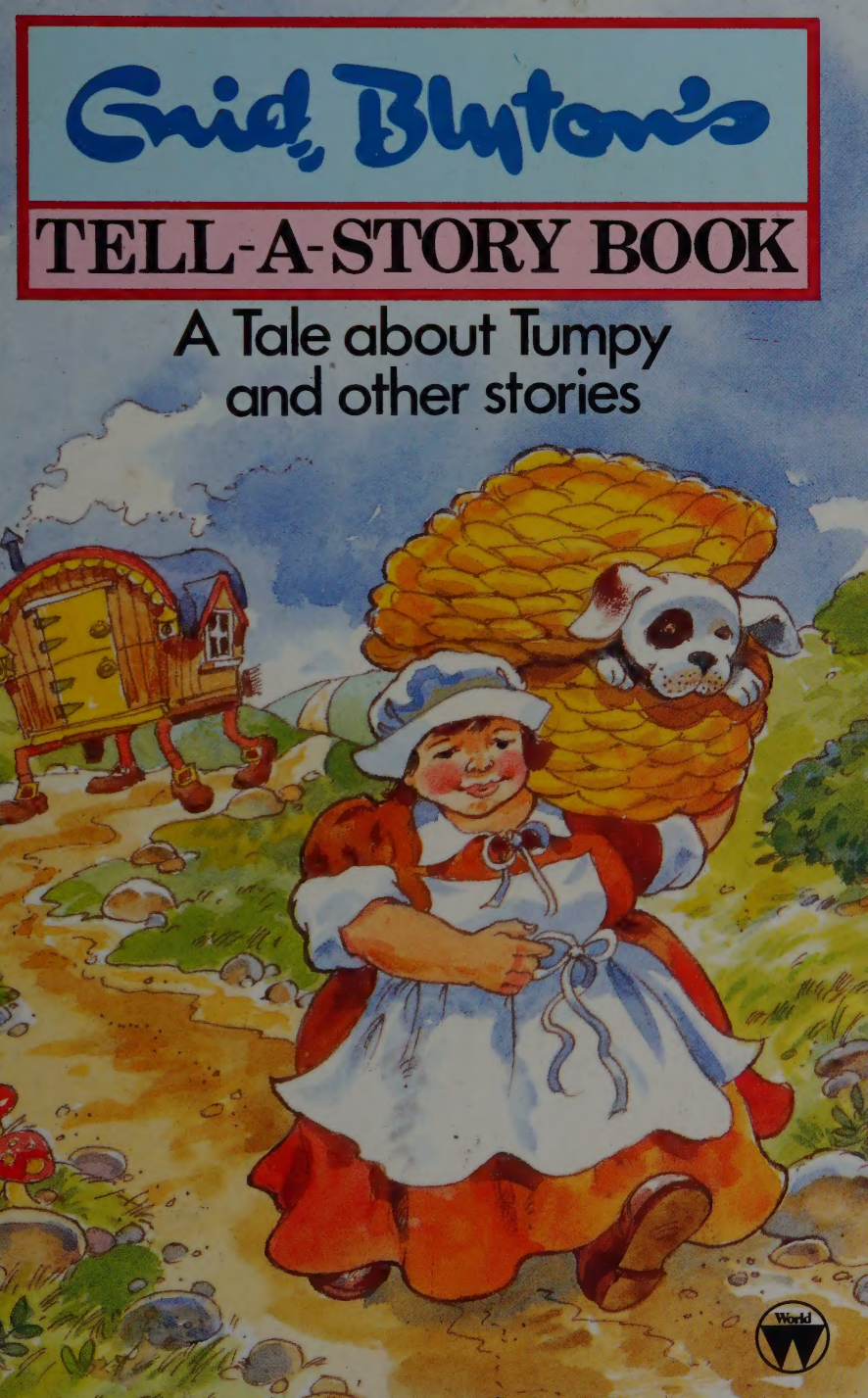
Enid Blyton's

TELL-A-STORY BOOK

A Tale about Tumpy and other stories



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One Snowy Night

JACK'S snow-man stood in the middle of the lawn. He was big and tall and fat. He had a very large round head, snow-feet that stuck out beneath him, and a very stout snow-body.

"He's grand!" said Jack. "Now I'll dress him. I'll get that old hat with a hole in the crown. And that torn old coat from the garage. And I'll find some old tramp's boots somewhere in the lane!"

He dressed up the snow-man, and gave him a smack on his shoulder. "There you are, Mister Shivers! You're as fine as the snow-woman the children next door have made!"

The next-door snow-woman was even fatter. The children hadn't been able to find her an old coat, so they had wrapped a ragged old shawl round her, and given her a broken-brimmed hat with faded flowers in it, that had once belonged to Cook. "There, Mrs. Very-Cold!" said the children. "You look quite real!"

All up and down the street the boys and girls had built snow-men and snow-women, for the snow was thick and soft, just right for making snow-people. There they were in the gardens, dressed in their funny old clothes, standing quite still and cold.

Now, that night, when it was dark and the children had gone to bed, the snow-man in Jack's garden began to talk to himself in a frosty kind of voice.

"Dirty, ragged old clothes! Why should we be dressed like this? Why should snow-people put up with old cast-off clothes, instead of good new ones? It's not fair, it's not right!"

He made up his mind to call a meeting of the snow-people and talk to them. So, one by one, they shuffled to the village green, and stood there in a ring, big, plump snow-people, all dressed in funny old clothes.

"It's a shame!" said the first snow-man. "Look at this old hat of mine! It's a perfect disgrace. I won't wear it!" He threw it down on the ground, and kicked off the old boots Jack had found for him.

"We must strike!" he cried to the others. "We will demand better clothes! Better clothes for snow-people!"

Now, the village policeman was going his rounds that night, and he was astonished to see a lot of people on the village green. Who could they be?

And why were they meeting so late at night? It was very mysterious.

He crept up to them. Dear me, they must be a lot of old tramps, they wore such peculiar clothes!

"We will strike!" cried the snow-people. "We will strike!"

"Aha!" said the policeman. "It's a secret strike meeting. I must break it up!"

So, to the surprise and horror of the meeting, the policeman suddenly sprang into the middle of the ring, and spoke in a very stern voice.

"To your homes, all of you! Quick march!"

Now, a snow-man cannot possibly walk quickly, and so hardly any of them moved. The policeman got angry. He tapped the nearest snow-man with his truncheon, and the snow-man's shoulder crumbled away a little, for it was only made of snow.

That frightened the snow-man very much. Oh, dear, if this fierce policeman began to hit him, he would fall away to nothing. He began to shuffle away.

So did the rest of them. But not nearly fast enough for the policeman, who was more and more puzzled about this queer meeting. He chased first this snow-man and then that. He made them hurry so that they almost fell. He made them puff and pant, and fall over their own big snow-feet.

One by one they disappeared into their own gardens, and when the policeman followed each of them, he found only a snow-person standing in the middle of each lawn, quite still.

"Funny!" he said, not liking it very much. "I don't understand all this. Perhaps the cold is making me think funny things. I'll go back to the police-station for a glass of hot milk."

The snow-people were very hot and bothered. They began to feel a bit queer. Jack's snow-man

suddenly felt his nose melting and running down his face. Then his ears melted, too!

Next door, the snow-woman there was having trouble with her feet. She had got very hot when she ran away from the policeman, and now her feet were melting and running away in big drops of water. Her head felt a bit unsteady, too.

In fact, all the snow-people were feeling the same. They wished they hadn't gone on strike! Better to be good snow-people in old clothes than melting ones calling out for good clothes!

The next-door snow-woman's hat fell off, because half her head had melted. She looked very queer. Then her shawl slipped off to the ground. "Oh, dear!" she thought. "I shall soon be gone. Why did I go to that silly meeting? However much

we strike, we shan't get better clothes. We're lucky to have any clothes at all, really. Some snow-people only have pipes in their mouths, stones for buttons, and a stick under their arm."

When the policeman came round again in the early morning, he saw the snow-people standing still and cold in the gardens—but all of them were half-melted, their clothes had fallen off, and they looked very sorry for themselves indeed.

"Ho!" said the policeman. "If it was you I met last night, I'd like to know what you were up to! A funny-looking lot you are, to be sure!"

Jack's snow-man felt ill and unhappy. "I shan't last much longer," he groaned to himself. "Why was I so silly? The weather is so cold and frosty that I would have lasted for weeks, if I'd been sensible. Now it's too late!"

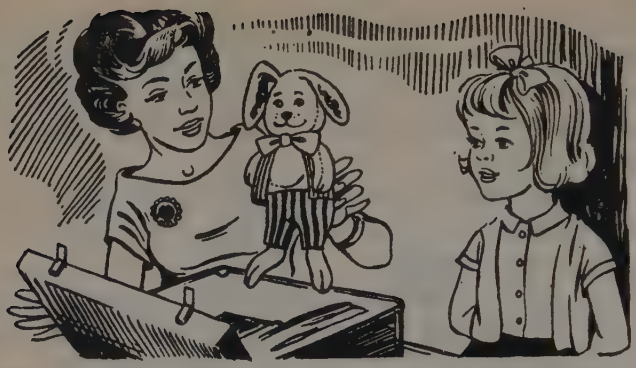
But it wasn't, for when the children came out to

play and found their snow-people half melted away, they built them all up again. Then they dressed them once more in the old clothes, and Jack even got a pipe of his father's for his snow-man to smoke.

And that night there was not a word to be heard from the snow-people. No, they just stood out there in the frost and cold enjoying themselves. The only time they shivered more than usual was when the policeman came by. Suppose he chased them again?

But he didn't. "Learnt your lesson, have you?" he said. "Snow-people on strike, indeed! You wait till *I* do a bit of striking—with my truncheon!"

They're still there, the snow-people, because the weather is so cold and frosty. Have you got a snow-man, too? I hope he won't walk off in the night because he doesn't like his old clothes!



Jane Goes Out To Stay

JANE was going to stay with her friend Pam. She felt very grand indeed. She had never been away from home before—but here she was, watching Mummy pack a little bag with her nightdress and dressing-gown, her flannel, sponge and toothbrush, and a clean frock.

"Shall I pack Bunny for you?" said Mummy.

"Oh, *no*," said Jane. "I know he sleeps with me every night, Mummy, but I'm too big to take a bunny away with me, Pam would laugh at me."

"No, she wouldn't. Pam is a year younger than you are, and I expect she takes a toy to bed with her every single night," said Mummy. "Very well. I won't put Bunny in."

Jane thought of all the things she would tell Pam. She wanted to make Pam think she was very grown-up and important. She would say, "Pam, do

you know this—Pam, do you know that?" and Pam would listen eagerly.

She arrived at Pam's in time for dinner. Pam hugged her, for she liked Jane very much.

"Do you mind being away from home?" she said. "Will you like staying with me? I've never stayed away even one night without Mummy."

"Ah, but I'm older than you," said Jane, grandly. "I'm in a class higher at school, too. I shan't mind staying away from home a bit!"

They had dinner, and then they went out to play. The dog next door barked, and made Pam jump.

"Pooh!" said Jane, scornfully. "Are you afraid of dogs? I've got a dog of my own at home. Can you ride?"

"No, I can't. Can you?" asked Pam.

"Oh, yes. I ride every Saturday, on a big, white pony called Sweetie," said Jane. "I gallop. And once I went so fast that everyone thought my pony was running away. But he wasn't."

"You must be very clever," said Pam. "I wish I could do things like that."

Jane chose all the games, and she chose ones she was quite the best in. She could run faster than Pam, and she could jump higher.

"Mummy, Jane is wonderful," said Pam, when they went in to tea. "She does everything so well. And she's not a bit afraid of dogs or horses—or of tigers, either, are you, Jane?"

"I don't expect I would be, if I met one," said Jane, pleased at all this praise. "I like animals. You ought to like animals, too, Pam, then you wouldn't be so scared when you see a big dog, or hear a cow moo."

After tea they played card games. Jane was much quicker at them than Pam. She snapped everything, and won four games straight off. Pam looked a little sad.

"I wish I could win once," she said.

"Have a game of Happy Families. You may win then," said her mother, feeling rather sorry for the smaller girl. She thought that Jane might just let Pam win once, to please her. But no, Jane won Happy Families, too.

"I'm stupid, aren't I?" said poor Pam, almost in tears. "I wish I was as wonderful as Jane, Mummy. She can do everything. Jane, do you ever cry?"

"Oh, no," said Jane. But this wasn't quite true. She did cry sometimes.

"Not even when you fall down and hurt your knee?" asked Pam.

"Of *course* not!" said Jane. "I'm not such a baby."

"Are you ever frightened in the night?" said Pam. "Because I am."

"Of *course* I'm not," said Jane, in a scornful voice. "I just go to sleep, and don't bother about anything, not even thunder."

"You're too good to be true, Jane, dear," said Pam's mummy. "And now I think it's bedtime. Hurry up and have a nice hot bath, because it's very cold tonight."

Soon the two little girls were in separate little beds, eating a nice supper. Then Pam's mother

said good night to them both, and went downstairs.

She came up a little later with Pam's hot-water bottle, and one for Jane, too. But Jane was already fast asleep. So very gently Pam's mother pushed the hot-water bottle, in its soft furry cover, down into the bed beside the sleeping Jane. Jane never had a hot-water bottle at home, and had never even asked for one.

Now about three hours later Jane woke up. She felt a warm patch against her legs. Whatever could it be? She put down her hand and felt it. It was soft and furry and warm. It must be some animal that had crept into bed with her when she was asleep!

"Go away!" said Jane, and kicked out at it. But it didn't move. It just lay against her leg, furry and warm. Jane felt suddenly frightened.

She sat up in bed and yelled. "Help! Help! There's a wild animal in bed with me! It's biting

me, it's biting me, help, help!"

Pam woke up with a jump. She switched on the light and stared at Jane. "Oh, Pam! There's a horrid wild animal in bed with me!" cried Jane again. "It'll bite me to bits! I believe it's nibbling me now! Oh! OHHHHH!"

"I'll save you, I'll save you!" cried Pam and she jumped out of bed. She pulled Jane right out of bed, and then threw back the covers. She saw the furry hot-water-bottle cover, and bent to pick it up and throw it away, thinking it was some animal.

Then she saw what it was. How she stared! Then she laughed. She had a very merry little laugh, that went ha-ha-ha-ho-ho-ho, he-he. She rolled on Jane's bed and she laughed till the tears came into her eyes.

"What's the matter, Pam?" asked Jane, offended. But Pam was laughing too much to tell her. Then in came Pam's mother to see what all the noise was about.

"Oh, Mummy, oh, Mummy! Jane was so funny!" said Pam. "She screamed and yelled and cried because she said she had a wild animal in her bed that was biting her to bits! And I got out to rescue her from the dreadful animal—and it was only her hot-water bottle!"

Then it was Mummy's turn to laugh. "Well, well, well—to think of our brave and wonderful Jane being scared of a hot-water bottle! I slipped it into your bed, dear, when you were asleep."

Poor Jane! She did feel so very, very silly. To think she had yelled like that over a hot-water bottle. And what a pity she had said it was biting her!

She got back into bed, very red in the face. She threw the hot-water bottle out on the floor.

"Now don't be cross as well as foolish, Jane," said Pam's mother. "It really was very funny, you know, and we couldn't help laughing. And don't you think little Pam was brave, to jump out of bed and come and try and save you from the wild animal you were shouting about?"

"Yes, she was brave," said Jane. "Thank you, Pam. You're braver than I am!"

Then they went to sleep. But you won't be surprised to hear that next day Jane was much nicer to Pam, and even let her win two games at Snap!

Little Master Sam

LITTLE Master Sam
Ate his bread and jam,
Sitting at the barnyard door;
Up came the hens and said,
"We'll have your jam and bread,
So throw it on the barnyard floor!"

But little Master Sam
Ate his bread and jam,
And waved his arms and said, "Shoo! Shoo!
You go away and lay
An egg for me today,
For THAT'S the proper thing for you to do!"

The Bold, Bad Boys!

DEREK and Tom loved to go down and play beside the river. They liked watching the boats go by, and when a steamer sailed along in midstream, making quite big waves break against the banks, they shouted with joy.

"Daddy, can't we have a boat of our own?" begged Derek. "Lots of the boys we know have. Why can't we?"

"For a very good reason," said Daddy. "You can't swim yet! I tried to teach you last summer, but you both cried because the water was cold, and

Tom yelled when I held him up and tried to make him do the arm-strokes."

The two boys looked rather ashamed. "If you'd let us have a boat, we promise we'd learn to swim this summer," said Derek.

"Oh, no!" said Daddy. "I'll promise you a boat when you have learnt to swim. That's the right way to put it."

The boys went off, rather sulky. "Lots of people who can't swim have boats," said Tom. "How can we have adventures, and go rowing off to find them, if we haven't got a boat? Daddy's mean."

"Never mind," said Derek. "We'll have a good time paddling. We'll call ourselves The Bold, Bad Boys and we'll look for adventures every single day. We'll be pirates and smugglers, and we'll be very bold and daring."

So they were. They became a great nuisance to the moorhens by the river, and the big swans hissed at them as they sailed grandly by. But when the cows came down to stand in the shallow part of the river, The Bold, Bad Boys ran away. They were rather afraid of cows!

Now, one day, when the two boys were sitting by the water, splashing it with their feet, they saw something coming down the river. It wasn't a boat. It wasn't a bird. What could it be?

"It's a barrel! An empty barrel, floating along by itself!" cried Derek. "If only we could get it, Tom. We could even hide in it."

They watched the barrel. It came bobbing along—and floated to where a low branch stretched out from the bank over the water. There it caught and stopped.

"Look, look!" cried Derek. "That branch has caught it. Oh, Tom, let's be really bold and crawl out on that branch and get the barrel. I think the water is shallow there, and maybe we could get on the barrel and push it over to the bank."

So, feeling very bold and daring, the two boys crawled along the branch to the barrel. Derek leaned down and caught hold of it.

"Tom, can you get on to the barrel whilst I hold it?" he said. "Quick, in case I have to let go. That's right. Oh, good, you're riding the barrel! Will it take me too, do you think?"

Tom had dropped neatly on to the barrel, and was now riding it astride, grinning happily. Derek dropped down beside him.

Now they were both on the barrel. "Work hard with your feet and we'll get it to the bank," said Derek. But, alas, as soon as they left the tree branch, the barrel, instead of going towards the bank, got caught by the midstream current and swung out into deep water. Then it began floating merrily down the river with the two boys riding it!

Tom screamed. "Derek, Derek! We're out in deep water. We'll drown!"

"Not if we cling to the barrel," said Derek, going rather white. "Hold on, Tom. Don't let go whatever you do. Oh, gracious, we're going fast!"

"I feel sick, I feel sick," wailed Tom. "I want to be rescued. Ooooooooh!"

Derek was scared, too. He clung to the bobbing barrel and looked round to see if any boat was about. Not one was anywhere to be seen. So on they bobbed and on and on.

Tom was crying.

Then suddenly a fisherman by the river saw them. "Help, help!" cried Derek. "Save us!"

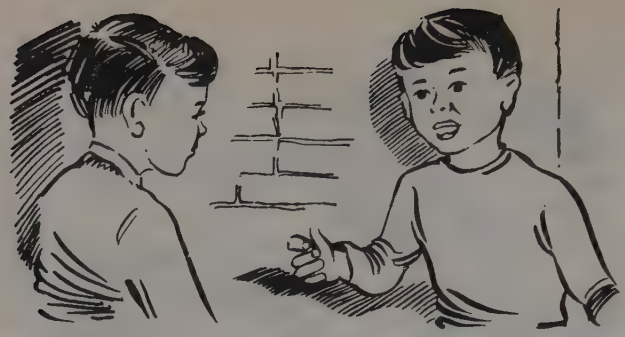
In the greatest astonishment the fisherman ran to a small boat near by and got into it. With three or four strong pulls at the oars he was soon alongside the barrel. He pulled the boys into the boat. Tom burst into wails.

"We were nearly drowned. Take me home to Mummy."

The fisherman rowed to shore. He found out where the boys lived and took them both back, wet and scared. Daddy came out when he saw them.

"Whatever's the matter?" he said. "Have you fallen in the river?"

"No, oh, no!" wailed Tom. "We saw a barrel floating down and we crawled out on a tree branch to it . . ."



"And got on it, meaning to take it to the bank, and it floated away with us," said Derek.

"I rescued them in time," said the fisherman, winking at Daddy. "Seems to me they're queer boys, not liking an adventure. Most boys are looking out for one every day."

"So do Tom and Derek," said their father. "In fact, I believe they call themselves The Bold, Bad Boys, and half the time they're smugglers and pirates. And when a little adventure like this comes along, they yell and howl and can't bear it! Well, well, well!"

"Why didn't they swim to shore?" asked the fisherman, surprised to hear all this.

"I'm sorry to have to tell you—but both boys are too scared to learn to swim," said Daddy, solemnly. "They want a boat—and yet they can't swim!"

"Well, they had a barrel for a boat, and they didn't seem to like that at all," said the fisherman. "I reckon a boat would be wasted on them."

"Just what I think," said Daddy. "Well, thanks

for rescuing them. Maybe one day they will welcome an adventure when they get one, instead of howling about it."

"Thanks for rescuing us, sir," said Derek, his face very red indeed. He felt so ashamed. To think they were the two Bold, Bad Boys, always looking out for an adventure, and now they had behaved like this!

Derek took Tom into the garden into their secret corner. "We're going to learn to swim!" he told Tom fiercely. "Do you hear, Tom? And there's to be no moaning and groaning about it. We're going to make Daddy proud of us for a change!"

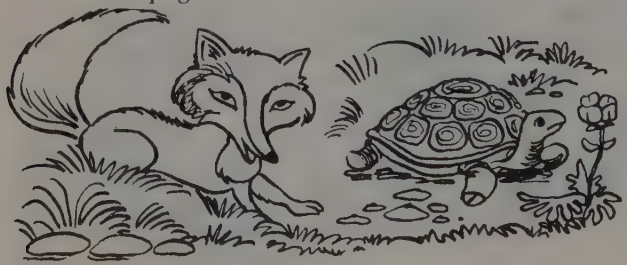
Well, the last time I saw Derek and Tom they were in a small, neat boat of their own, rowing out on the river. So I knew they had learnt to swim, and could really look for exciting adventures. Do you know what they have called their boat? Guess? It's called *The Bold, Bad Boys*!

Fill In The **Missing***Words*

As brave as a .... I'd like to be,
As fleet as the ..... when I run,
As wise as the ... who sits up in the tree
And sleeps till the day is done.
But slow as a ..... I would not be
Nor blind as a ... in flight,
Nor sly as a ... who creeps to see
What rabbits are out in the night!

And when this rhyme to my mother I told
She said, "Just try to be as good as ....!"

Answers on page 55



A Tale About Tumpy

I MUST tell you a tale about Tumpy and his caravan. He and Mr. Spells shared it with Bits the dog. It was a most unusual caravan because it had feet instead of wheels, and it could walk for miles, taking Tumpy, Mr. Spells and Bits with it.

Now one day Tumpy looked at the caravan curtains and he saw that they were very dirty. "Look here, Spells," he said, "just look at these curtains! You must wash them!"

"Good gracious, no!" said Spells, alarmed. "I couldn't possible wash big things like these. You wash them yourself!"

"Oh, well," said Tumpy, "we'll send them to the washerwoman in the next village—what's her name now—Mrs. Suds."

"All right. I'll take them down and pack them into the basket," said Spells. "Hey, Bits—come and hold the ladder for me!" Bits the dog helped all he could. Mr. Spells took down the curtains, sneezing because of the dust in them. They were the winter curtains, nice warm velvet ones. Spells popped them all into the big basket.

Then he went out to do some shopping. "You mind the caravan while we shop," he told Bits, and off went Tumpy and Spells together.

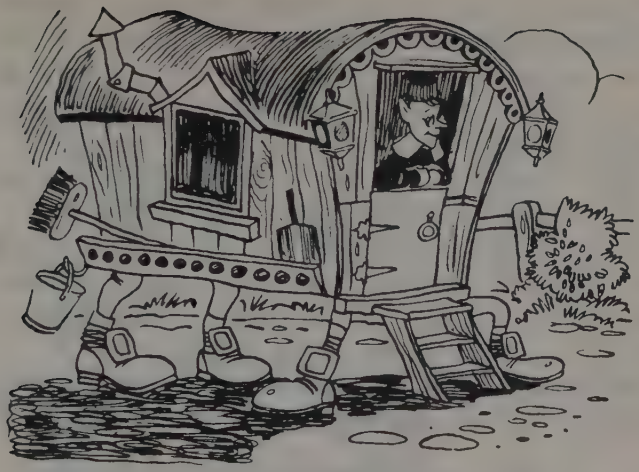
Bits the dog was bored. He tried to find a comfortable place to lie in, but he couldn't. He wasn't allowed on the beds, and Tumpy had hung all the rugs out on a line outside, ready to beat them when he came back. Bits felt cross.

Then he saw the basket of velvet curtains. Ah! they looked comfortable and soft and warm. Tumpy and Spells wouldn't be back for some time. He could hop into the basket, snuggle between the curtains there and have a fine sleep.

So Bits jumped in, snuggled on the velvet curtains, put his nose on his paws, and fell asleep. He was still asleep when Tumpy and Spells came back. They were in a hurry.

"What a bit of luck that we met the washerwoman!" said Tumpy. "Now she can take the curtains home with her and we can call for them on our way back in the caravan."

Mrs. Suds was a big, plump woman. She could carry the basket on her shoulders easily. Tumpy



shut down the lid, and fastened it. He gave it to Mrs. Suds and watched her stagger off with it.

"I wouldn't have thought that curtains weighed so heavily," said Tumpy to Spells. "Well, let's go on our way, Spells. Hey, Caravan—put your best foot foremost! Off we go again!"

The caravan set off. It hadn't gone very far before Tumpy missed Bits the dog. "Where's Bits?" he said, looking in every corner of the caravan. "Hey, Bits! BITS! Where are you? Now, where's that dog gone?"

"Stop, Caravan, stop!" called Spells. "We've lost Bits." But the caravan didn't stop. It was enjoying having a walk after its long rest. It went just a bit faster.

"Caravan! Do as you're told!" shouted Tumpy. "You are most disobedient today. Stop, I say!"

But the caravan began to run, and Tumpy sat down very suddenly. Things began to slide here and there inside the van.

"We'd better get out and try and find Bits," said Spells, anxiously. But Tumpy shook his head.

"No. With the caravan in this silly sort of mood we'll be left behind, Spells. Goodness knows where it will run to! We might lose it altogether. Oh, dear—where in the world can Bits be?"

Well, the caravan ran on all that day and all that night. "It's gone right past the washerwoman's

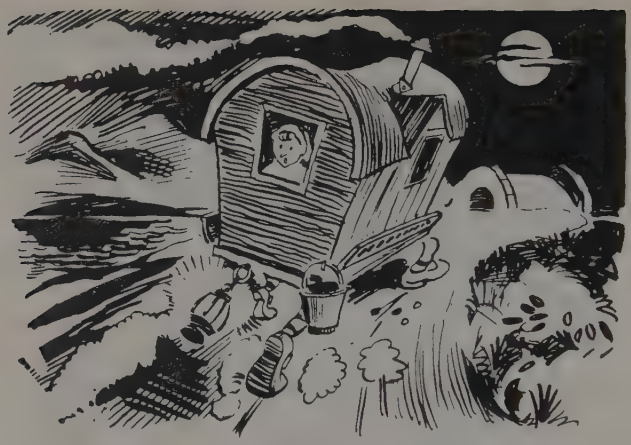
village," said Spells, gloomily. "Now we shall lose our curtains, too. Really, this caravan wants a

good smacking. Trotting on and on like this. What behaviour!"

Well, very fortunately, the caravan got a thorn in one of its feet at the next village it came to, so it stopped. Tumpy and Spells were very glad. They said a lot of furious things to the caravan, and then wondered what to do about looking for poor Bits. Where COULD he have got to?

"Hallo! Who's this coming panting up to us?" said Tumpy, suddenly. "It looks like Mr. Suds, the washerwoman's husband. And he's got our washing-basket on his shoulder. Oh, good—Mrs. Suds must have done the curtains already."

It *was* Mr. Suds. He set the basket down and



gave Tumpy a bill. Tumpy stared in surprise. "For washing three pairs velvet curtains, very dirty —one pound. For washing one dog, also very dirty, fifty pence."

"Dog!—what dog?" said Tumpy, astonished. "We didn't send a dog to be washed."

"Yes, you did," said Mr. Suds. "He was in the basket too. So Mrs. Suds washed him and you won't know him, he's so clean. She's popped him into a paper bag, and he's in with the curtains. We nearly charged you extra because he tried to bite. But I slapped him, and he's a good dog now."

Tumpy opened the lid of the basket—and out leapt poor Bits, looking so clean that Tumpy and Spells really didn't know him! He jumped up at them, and licked them till they were quite wet.

"Oh, Bits! You must have put yourself into the basket and got taken away to be washed!" said Tumpy, patting him. "How silly you are! Don't you do such a stupid thing again!"

"He won't," said Mr. Suds. "He got the soap in his eyes, and he didn't like being pegged up on the line a bit. It's a good thing Mrs. Suds didn't iron him like the curtains."

"Woof," said poor Bits, with his tail down. What a fuss Spells and Tumpy made of him that day! And will you believe it, the very first chance Bits had, he went and rolled himself in some mud. What a waste of sixpence!

Little Sammy Sly-One

LITTLE Sammy Sly-One
Hadn't any money,
He went into the market
And stole a pot of honey.

He spilt it on his trousers
And on his coat of yellow,
And all the bees came flying
To rob the naughty fellow!

Ha, little Sammy Sly-One,
It's *not* so very funny
To go into the market
And steal a pot of honey!

Go And Dig Potatoes!

ONCE, when little Dame Hurry was walking over the common with her shopping in a basket, she heard a lark singing. It was singing so beautifully that she looked up to see where it was.

"Your music pours down like rain!" she called to the lark. She hurried on her way, still looking up at the singing lark, high in the blue sky. She didn't see a rabbit-hole. She put her little foot right into it and fell over.

She gave a scream. "Oh, my ankle, my ankle! I've sprained it. Oh, the pain! Help, help!"

Poor little Dame Hurry sat on the grass and nursed her foot. She couldn't stand on it because it hurt her so. All her shopping was spilt from her basket. Dear, dear, and her Aunt Lollipop was coming to dinner.

"Help!" called Dame Hurry, hoping that someone would hear her. "Help!"

Somebody did hear her. It was Grabbit the Goblin. He came over to Dame Hurry, and she told him what she had done. "Could you help me home, please?" she asked. "And pick up my shopping for me?"

"I shall want something in return for my trouble," said Grabbit, who was mean and unkind.

"Oh, can't you help me just out of kindness?" said Dame Hurry. "It's so much nicer to do things for that reason, if you can."

"Pooh! Kindness! Not me," said Grabbit rudely. "Well, if you can't give me a reward for helping you, I'm off. No one else is likely to come by today, so you'll be here all day—and all night, too, I shouldn't wonder!"

"How mean you are," said Dame Hurry. "But don't go, please don't go. I really must get home before my Aunt Lollipop comes. I'll give you a silver shilling for your trouble."

"No, I don't want that," said Grabbit, looking suddenly very sly. "I want something else. Lend me your magic spade for a week."

"Certainly not!" said Dame Hurry. "What, lend my precious magic to *you*? I wouldn't dream of it."

"Right, then! I'm going," said Grabbit, and took a step away.

Dame Hurry began to cry. "All right, all right, you mean creature. I'll lend you my spade for a week, and much good may it do you!"

"It will!" said Grabbit. "It can dig up all my potatoes for me! Ho, ho! It will save me a lot of work, I can tell you."

He helped Dame Hurry to her feet, after he had picked up her shopping. Then he helped her home. Her Aunt Lollipop had already arrived, and ran to bathe Dame Hurry's poor swollen foot.

"What about that spade?" said Grabbit. "I want it now."

"Oh dear, oh dear, can't you even wait till my foot is bathed?" said Dame Hurry. "Well, you will find it in the garden-shed. But, listen, Grabbit, you will have to speak to the spade politely and kindly, and you must always clean it when it has been working for you."

"Pooh!" said Grabbit, rudely, and went off to get the spade. It was rather a peculiar one, for it had no proper handle, but a very big steel piece for digging. Grabbit picked it up, put it over his shoulder, and went home.

He stuck the spade into the ground. "Go and dig potatoes," he commanded. The spade hopped over to a potato patch and set to work. It was marvellous to see it digging away by itself.

"Hey! Sort the potatoes out nicely," said Grabbit to the spade. "Don't fling them here, there and everywhere. Big ones together, and middle-size ones, and small ones, do you hear?"

The spade dug so violently that one of the potatoes shot up in the air and hit Grabbit on the head. He growled and went indoors.

The spade finished digging up that patch of potatoes. It hopped into the kitchen to be cleaned. But Grabbit wasn't going to bother to do that!

"Go and stand in the shed," he ordered the spade. "*I'm* not going to bother to clean you."

The spade hopped out, making a tremendous noise as if it was cross. Grabbit went to sleep.

Next day he ordered the spade to dig up a weedy patch of garden for him. "And do it properly!" he said. "Get the weeds up by the roots. Go on, dig!"

The spade dug. It flung up the weeds so high that bits of earth flew all over Grabbit. He went indoors, frowning. As soon as he had gone into the house the spade went over to the fence and leaned itself there. It didn't do any more digging at all.

When Grabbit came out and found that the spade had done hardly any digging, he lost his temper. "I'll chop you up! I'll burn you on the rubbish-heap! You'll do what I say or you'll be sorry!"

He didn't clean the spade that day, either. It went to its place in the shed so dirty that there wasn't one single shiny bit to be seen. It scraped itself angrily along the floor.

The next day Grabbit wanted to go and do some shopping. He called to the spade first. "Go and dig potatoes! Dig and dig and dig! Don't you dare to stop digging once you begin. Go and dig potatoes!"

The spade hopped out to a very big potato patch and began to dig. It was afraid of Grabbit. Suppose he really did chop it up? Then it would never go to live with kind little Dame Hurry again.

Grabbit went out shopping. He met some friends and was a very long time gone. The spade dug up all the potatoes and sorted them out carefully.

Then it wondered where Grabbit was and went to look for him in the kitchen. No Grabbit. Well,

well, Grabbit had told the spade to dig and dig and dig, and not stop, so the spade thought it had better obey.

It went out into the garden and dug up all the rose-trees. Then it dug up the onions. Then it went to the lawn and dug up all the grass.

Well, there was no garden to dig after that. What could the spade do next? It had to dig and dig and dig!

It dug up the fence. That was a hard job, and the spade enjoyed it. Then it dug up the garden-shed. My, that was a fine job for a magic spade! It dug so hard that it almost panted.

Still Grabbit wasn't back. So the spade began to dig up Grabbit's cottage. It dug and it dug, heaving itself underneath it, and soon the cottage began to topple over on one side. The spade was pleased.

Then Grabbit came back. He was shocked to see his cottage toppling over. He was horrified to see

his garden-shed lying on its side. He couldn't believe his eyes when he saw his fence dug up—and his lawn—and his roses. He must be in a dream!

But he wasn't. It was quite, quite true. He rushed at the hard-working spade with a shout —but it hopped away at once, and went back to Dame Hurry.

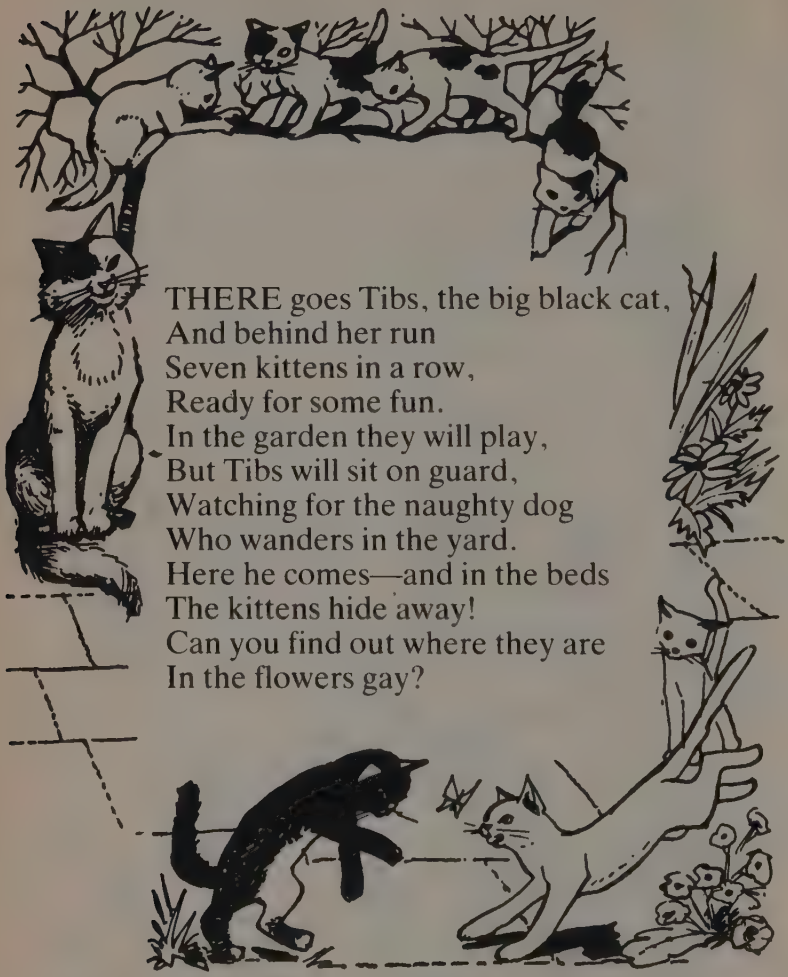
Grabbit went crying round to Dame Hurry, too. "Come and see the damage your horrid magic spade has done. Dug up my fence and shed and my house, too! You'll have to pay me for all that!"

"Indeed I shan't," said Dame Hurry. "You can put everything right yourself. It's all your own fault. And if you say another word, I'll *give* you the spade, Grabbit—and maybe it will start digging you up, too!"

"I wish I'd helped you out of kindness now," wept Grabbit. "I wish I had. I wouldn't have brought all this trouble on myself then."

"Ah, no luck comes to those who have to be paid for doing a bit of kindness," said Dame Hurry. "No luck at all. Just you remember that, Grabbit."

Hidden Kittens



THERE goes Tibs, the big black cat,
And behind her run
Seven kittens in a row,
Ready for some fun.
In the garden they will play,
But Tibs will sit on guard,
Watching for the naughty dog
Who wanders in the yard.
Here he comes—and in the beds
The kittens hide away!
Can you find out where they are
In the flowers gay?

Wherever Can We Be?

ONCE upon a time an old lady went out on a dark night. She took her torch with her, so that she could see, and she got along quite well—until she tripped over the kerb and dropped her torch!

Crash! The torch fell to the ground and broke. Its light went out. It was no use any more.

And there was the old lady left all by herself in the dark. She didn't like it at all.

"Never mind," she said. "I must try to find my way home without a torch. I think I can find it if I go slowly."

So she turned herself about and went down the road. But it wasn't very long before she knew that she was lost. She didn't know the name of the road. She didn't meet anyone. Everywhere was dark, and not even a motor car drove down the street.

"I'm quite, quite lost," said the old lady to herself. "I can't see a thing. There's no moon. There's no one to ask. This is dreadful."

And then, far down the road, she saw the tiny gleam of somebody else's torch! How glad she was! She waited and heard the tap-tap of somebody's small feet. It must be a little boy or girl.

Soon the light of the torch came nearer. It was very dim. The old lady couldn't see who was holding it, but she spoke in a timid voice.

"Please may I come with you? I'm lost, and I can't see a thing!"

The footsteps stopped and a voice spoke. "Well, perhaps I had better take you home. Who are you?"

"I'm old Mrs. Lacy, and I'm only staying in this town, so I don't know it very well," said the old lady. "If you could lend me your torch for a little while, I might be able to see where I am, and then I could go home."

It was a small boy who had the torch. His name was Freddy Brown. He didn't at all like being out in the dark, and he knew that his torch's light wouldn't last very long! It was very dim now. Mother had said he must hurry home from his auntie's, or the light would go out altogether, for the torch needed a new battery.

But he knew he must help old people, so he put his torch into the old lady's hands.

"There you are," he said. "See if you can find

your way with that. I'll come with you and keep you company till you're home—and then I'll find my own way with my torch."

"You're a kind soul," said old Mrs. Lacy gratefully. "I'm so glad you came along. Now, let's go down here and I'll see where I am when I get to the end of the road."

Before long she had found out where she was. She and Freddy went round the corner, down another road, and round another corner. Freddy didn't really know where he was going, for he blindly followed the old lady. She turned another corner, and then went down a little passage-way. Freddy began to feel quite lost! He hoped he would be able to find his own way home, after all this twisting and turning!

"Ah! Here we are at last!" said the old lady, pleased, and she opened a gate, "Thank you, Freddy Brown. You have helped me such a lot. Here is your torch again. I hope you will get home safely with it."

At that moment the torch flickered and went out! Freddy was left in the black darkness.

"Oh, dear—what has happened to your torch?" asked Mrs. Lacy.

"The battery is all used up," said Freddy. "I can't see with it now. I suppose you haven't another torch to lend me, have you?"

"I'm afraid I haven't," said the old lady. "I broke mine this evening. But listen, little boy—go to the house next door and ask the boy there to lend you *his* torch. He's a very nice boy. I often see him playing in the garden. I don't know his name, because I'm only staying here, and I don't know anyone yet."

"All right—I'll go and ask the boy to lend me his torch," said Freddy, hoping that the boy wouldn't laugh at him. "I'm glad you're safe. Good night."

"Good night," said Mrs. Lacy. "And thank you very, very much. I hope I shall see you again one day."

Freddy went in at the next door gate. He made his way up the path in the darkness. He felt about for a bell and rang it. He wondered if the boy would come to the door. What should he say to him?

Somebody came up the hall and opened the door. The hall was dark and Freddy couldn't see who it was. He spoke as politely as he could.

"Please does a boy live here who has a torch?"

"Yes," said a voice that he felt as if he knew very well indeed. "Freddy Brown lives here—but he's not in. He is out with his torch."

Freddy listened in the greatest surprise. How could Freddy Brown live here? Why, *he* was Freddy Brown! And then suddenly he knew that it was his own home he had come to, and it was his own mother who was speaking to him in the darkness!

"Mother! Oh, Mother! It's me!" yelled Freddy. "I've come here asking for myself! Oh, how funny!"

"Freddy! I *thought* it sounded like your voice," cried his mother. "Whatever do you mean by asking if a boy lives here who has a torch?"

"Let me come in and I'll tell you, Mother," said Freddy happily, and soon he and his mother were in the cosy sitting-room, and Freddy was telling her all about the old lady he had helped home with his torch.

"And when my torch went out, she said there was a nice boy who lived next door who had a torch!" laughed Freddy. "So I came to ask myself to lend me my own torch! Oh,Mother—did you ever know anything so funny?"

"I never did!" said his mother. "That old lady

must be Mrs. Lacy, who is staying with Mrs. Thomas next door. Well, well—to think that you were kind enough to take her home, and bring yourself safely home at the same time!"

You should have seen how surprised Mrs. Lacy was when Freddy popped his head over the fence next day and said:

"Good morning, Mrs. Lacy! I'm so glad you got home safely last night!"

And she did laugh when she heard how she had sent Freddy to his own house to borrow his own torch from himself. He is going to tea with her today, and I rather think he is going to have a good time—for the old lady went shopping this morning and took home chocolate biscuits, ginger snaps, currant buns and a big jam sandwich in her basket. Lucky Freddy!

Answers to Fill in the Missing Words

Lion, Horse, Owl, Tortoise, Bat, Fox, Gold.

The Dirty Old Teddy

ONCE there was an old, old teddy-bear in the toy-cupboard. He was so old and dirty that nobody knew what colour he had once been, and he didn't even remember himself.

He only had one arm, and one of his legs was loose. His eyes were odd, because one was a black boot-button and the other was brown. He had a hole in his back and sawdust sometimes came out of it. So you can guess he was rather a poor old thing.

But he was wise and kind and loved to make a joke, so the other toys loved him and didn't mind him being so dirty and old.

"All the same, I'm afraid he'll be thrown away into the dustbin one day," said the golliwog, shaking his black head. "I'm afraid he will. He really is *so* old and dirty."

The little girl in whose nursery the bear lived never played with the old teddy. She had a fine new one, coloured blue, with a pink ribbon round his neck, two beautiful eyes, and a growl in his middle. She loved him very much. She always pushed the old teddy away if he was near her.

One day her nurse picked up the old teddy and looked at him. A little sawdust dribbled out of the hole in his back.

"Good gracious!" said Nurse. "This old teddy really must be thrown away. He isn't even nice enough to be given to the jumble sale."

"Well, throw him away, then," said Joan. "I don't want him. He looks horrid with only one arm and a leg that wobbles, Nurse. I never play with him now."

All the toys listened in horror. What! Throw away the poor old teddy! Oh, dear, what a terrible pity!

"Well, I'll put him in the waste-paper-basket when the maid brings it in," said Nurse. She put the teddy on the table beside her and went on with her knitting. Soon the bell rang for dinner, and Nurse forgot about Teddy.

As soon as she had gone out of the room the toys called to the bear, "Hurry, Teddy! Get down from the table and hide at the back of the toy-cupboard!"

The bear fell off the table and limped over to the toy-cupboard. He really was very frightened.

He hoped that the nurse wouldn't remember she had left him on the table.

She didn't remember—because when she came back she had another child with her, besides Joan. A little boy clung to her hand, and Nurse was talking to him.

"You will love staying with us, Peter dear. You shall play with Joan's toys, and have a ride on the rocking-horse."

Peter was Joan's cousin and he had come to stay

with Joan for three weeks. He was a dear little boy, but very shy. The toys watched him all the afternoon. He was frightened of the rocking-horse because it was so big. He liked the doll's house because everything in it was little. He loved the top that spun round and played a tune, and he liked the train that ran on its lines.

When bedtime came, and he sat eating bread-and-milk in front of the nursery fire, he began to cry.

"I've left my old monkey behind," he wept. "I always go to bed with him. I shall be lonely without him."

"Well, you shall have one of Joan's toys to take to bed with you," said Nurse, and she took him to the toy-cupboard. "Choose which you would like, Peter."

Peter picked up the golly—and then the rabbit—and then the sailor-doll—and then the blue cat. And then, quite suddenly, he saw the dirty old teddy-bear looking up at him out of his odd brown and black eyes. He gave a squeal and picked him up.

"Oh, Nurse! Can I have this darling soft teddy? He looks at me so kindly—and I do like his funny eyes. Oh, please, please, may I take *him* to bed with me?"

"Good gracious! It's the bear I meant to throw away in the dustbin!" said Nurse. "You don't want a dirty old toy like that, surely!"

"Yes I do—yes I do!" cried Peter, and he hugged the bear hard. "I shall cry if you don't let me have him."

"Of course you shall have him, but if you love him so much I shall have to mend him up a bit tomorrow," said Nurse. So Peter took the old teddy to bed with him—and you simply can't imagine how happy the bear was!

He cuddled up to Peter and loved him. It was such a long, long time since he had been taken to bed by anyone. He was so happy that even his little growl came back when Peter pressed his tummy.

And next day—good gracious! Nurse took him and made him a new arm. She sewed on his wobbly leg. She mended the hole in his back—and she made him a beautiful blue smock with little sleeves!

You can't think how different he looked! The other toys looked at him in amazement and joy.

"You won't go into the dustbin now, Teddy," they said. "You look simply lovely!" And he does, doesn't he?

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